

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

SAM-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01 /074 W
----- 055353

R 161339Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0135

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: BONN POLITICIANS DO NOT EXPECT A QUICK SOLUTION OF THE SAARLAND PROBLEM

BEGIN SUMMARY: BONN POLITICIANS DO NOT EXPECT A QUICK SOLUTION OF THE SAARLAND PROBLEM. THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION CONTINUES TO PRESS FOR A THREE PARTY GOVERNMENT IN THE SAARLAND (3-3-1) WHICH WOULD GIVE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND LIBERALS AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE BUNDES RAT. THE CDU BELIEVES THAT THE FDP WILL EVENTUALLY BOW TO PRESSURE TO FORM A COALITION WITH THE CDU RATHER THAN BEAR THE ONUS OF PERPETUATING A GOVERNMENT CRISIS IN THE SAARLAND. THE DYNAMICS OF THE SITUATION ARE SUCH THAT THEY DO NOT FAVOR A QUICK SOLUTION.
END SUMMARY

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1. COMMENTS BY POLITICIANS IN BONN INDICATE THAT THEY

DO NOT EXPECT A QUICK SOLUTION TO THE STAND-OFF AS A RESULT OF THE MAY 4 VOTE IN THE SAARLAND LANDTAG (SPD/FDP 25 SEATS--CDU 25 SEATS). THE COALITION PARTIES IN BONN ARE STILL CALLING FOR A THREE PARTY GOVERNMENT IN THE SAARLAND WHICH, THEY BELIEVE, SHOULD BE DIVIDED: THREE SEATS FOR THE SPD, ONE SEAT FOR THE FDP AND THREE SEATS FOR THE CDU INCLUDING THE MINISTER PRESIDENCY. ONE FDP SOURCE IN BONN HAS SAID THAT THE SAARLAND FDP WILL MAINTAIN ITS POLICY OF NO COALITION WITH THE CDU AND THAT HE EXPECTS A CDU ACTING GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE IN POWER UNTIL THE BUDGET PERIOD RUNS OUT NEXT YEAR. AT THAT TIME, THE FDP AND SPD WILL REFUSE TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AND NEW ELECTIONS WILL HAVE TO BE CALLED. HE BELIEVED THAT THE FDP IN THE SAARLAND, HAVING PROVED ITS LOYALTY TO ITS PRINCIPLES, WOULD GAIN IN A NEW ELECTION.

2. THE NATIONAL CDU SUPPORTS THE CALL FOR A COALITION WITH THE FDP IN THE SAARLAND WHICH, IT HOPES, WOULD SERVE AS A MODEL FOR A NATIONAL COALITION IF THE UNION DOES NOT OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS. SOME CDU POLITICIANS IN BONN BELIEVE THAT BY MAINTAINING THIS POSITION, PRESSURE WILL BUILD UP ON THE FDP AND FORCE THE LIBERALS TO CHANGE THEIR POLICY. THIS IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE FDP WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE PRESSURE OF APPEARING PETTY BY PERMITTING THE SAARLAND TO REMAIN IN A STATE OF GOVERNMENT CRISIS.

3. ACCORDING TO THE SAARLAND CONSTITUTION, A TWO-THIRDS VOTE IS NECESSARY TO DISSOLVE THE LANDTAG AND BRING ABOUT A NEW ELECTION, WHICH MEANS THAT THE SPD AND THE CDU MUST VOTE TOGETHER. UNDER THE SAARLAND CONSTITUTION, AN ELECTION MUST TAKE PLACE AT THE LATEST, THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE DISSOLUTION OF THE LANDTAG.

4. THE DYNAMICS OF THE SITUATION ARE SUCH THAT THERE IS NO HEAVY PRESSURE ON ANY OF THE PARTIES TO ACCEPT A LESS THAN ADVANTAGEOUS SOLUTION. ON THE CDU SIDE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SO LONG AS THE SPD/FDP DOES NOT OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESRAT WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THE SAARLAND VOTING WITH THE SPD/FDP BLOC AND NOT SIMPLY ABSTAINING, THE POST-MAY 4 ELECTION SITUATION IN THE BUNDESRAT PERMITS THE CDU/CSU TO BLOCK OR ALTER KEY GOVERNMENT BILLS. FOR THE SPD/FDP, THERE IS NO INCENTIVE TO SPLIT UP AND JOIN THE CDU IF THERE IS A CHANCE OF GAINING THE SAARLAND VOTES FOR THE SOCIAL/

LIBERAL COALITION IN BONN. ONE COULD ARGUE THAT THE
SPD OR FDP COULD GAIN POWER LOCALLY BY JOINING THE
CDU. HOWEVER, SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE EXTREMELY DESTA-
BILIZING FOR THE BONN COALITION AND COULD WELL COST
MORE THAN IT WAS WORTH. IN SUM, THE SITUATION IN THE
SAARLAND DOES NOT FAVOR A QUICK SOLUTION.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL PARTIES, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BONN07934
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750173-0729
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750542/aaaabljk.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2003 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BONN POLITICIANS DO NOT EXPECT A QUICK SOLUTION OF THE SAARLAND PROBLEM
TAGS: PINT, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006